The Computer Rag
newsletter of the
YOKOSUKA COMPUTER CLUB

News, Gossip & Innuendo from the Western Pacific

Local Gossip

Important Notice: Yokosuka Computer Club is now meeting on the first floor of the Naval Hospital in the General Practice Clinic conference room. Meetings in January will be on the second Wed., Jan. 8, and the third Tues., Jan. 14, both at 6 p.m. This means you won't have to carry your machines up three floors without an elevator and, provided you don't park in a reserved space, you shouldn't have to fight for parking.

December Meetings: During the Wed. meeting club members planned a computer workshop for novices, to be held Sat., Jan. 11. The workshop will run from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., and cover spreadsheets, data base management, word processing, and telecommunications, as well as any other topics of interest. The workshop will be held in the Naval Hospital General Practice Clinic Conference room, which is also the new site for computer club meetings. Stop by to either help out or ask those questions you've been saving for the right moment.

On the Tues. meeting, in a political ploy both stunning and bold, Douglas Hermann was railroaded into office as the new Club president. Hermann may be retiring and leaving Japan at any moment but, until that moment arrives, all Club members should rest easy in the knowledge that we are no longer leaderless.

Douglas and Robin Hermann also demonstrated Newsroom, a very clever page layout program for the Apple II. It is cheap ($36 or so), flexible, fun, and useful. If you have an Apple II, and need something a bit flashier than a word processor for reports or newsletters, Newsroom comes highly recommended.

A-33: There have been a number of complaints recently about the lack of stock and lack of good help in the computer showroom. If you have complaints, don't give them to the Club — complain to the store manager or NEX regional office. They really do listen.

Non-Local Gossip

Popular Computing and its principle competitor, **Creative Computing** have folded. **Creative Computing** stopped with Vol. 11, no. 12, and was the oldest personal computer magazine going. It still had a couple hundred thousand subscribers, but was not "growing" as fast as the publisher wanted, so was killed.

First Class Peripherals was selling their "Sider" 10 Mb hard disk for the Apple II for $595 through Dec. 31. If you write to them, you may still be able to get one at this price.

Now that the Danish government has selected the Macintosh as the standard personal computer for all government and education functions, other Scandinavian countries are considering similar moves. Sweden seems to be the chief holdout, mainly because it has several computer companies, none of which are doing well at the moment.
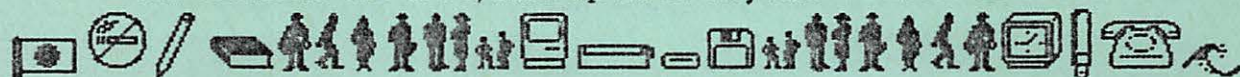
Computer Workshop

Saturday, Jan. 11, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
At the Naval Hospital General Practice Clinic Conference Room

Sessions on Spreadsheets and general information (9-10 a.m.), Word Processing (10 a.m.-noon), Telecommunications (noon-1 p.m.) and Database Management (1 p.m.-3 p.m.).

All sessions are free, and open to anyone with an interest.

Abaton has released Drive 5.25, a 5.25" disk drive for the Macintosh which allows the Mac to read and write MSDOS, CP/M, and UNIX files. No price for the drive has been released.

VIP Technologies is working on a board which will allow Apple II machines to run — unmodified — IBM PC software.

Microsoft is dropping Typographer, a page layout program announced just a couple months ago for the Mac. Microsoft claimed it was full of bugs and too difficult to use. Broca Software, which wrote the program, is looking for another publisher (T/Maker has expressed interest), or may publish the package itself.

Management Resources Intl. is working on a board for the Apple II which allows it to be attached to a compact laser disk drive. The same board will also have 512K, a 68000 processor, and run GEM.

Hyperdrive, a 10 Mb internal hard disk for the Mac from General Computer, has been reduced from $2195 to $1695, and the 20 Mb version has dropped from $2795 to $2195.

Why you would want to is not clear, but "Mac+][" will allow you to write and run Apple Integer BASIC and Applesoft BASIC programs on a Mac, as well as run 6502 machine language programs.

Apple sales for the fiscal year ending Sept. 27 came to a cool $1.92 billion.

More Apple rumors: a new Mac may come out in Jan. with 1 Mb RAM, 128K ROM, 800K internal disk drive, a new keyboard with numeric keypad, and a CISI (computer instruments standard interface) port. All this will, of course, cost more. Later in the year, a 68010 CPU may be used in another Mac having 1 to 4 Mb of RAM and 2 to 4 expansion slots, plus an internal hard disk. No color Mac is planned — but the IIe (not II or IIc) may begin to look a bit like a color Mac with some new programs for the recently introduced 3.5" disk drives and Apple's megabyte memory board.

If you have an Apple II and AppleWorks, look into Pinpoint Desktop Accessories, for $69. "Informed sources" claim it works inside Appleworks or other ProDos programs and includes a Notepad, Cut & Paste, Envelope Addresser, Appointment Calendar, Graph Merge (moves DazzleDraw or Mousepaint pictures into AppleWorks text files), Telephone Dialer, Communications Window, Calculator, and Typewriter emulator.

Commodore is losing lots and lots of money ($124 million in the quarter ending Sept. 30) but claims this will not hurt the Amiga's $40 million ad campaign. As one analyst cheerfully put it, "Commodore is too big to go bankrupt — this year."

DEC has announced a CD-ROM drive for the Rainbow and IBM PC and compatibles for $2300 or so. It is also selling (for under $1250) yearly subscriptions to National Technical Information Service (NTIS) Computers, Communications and Electronics; NTIS Environmental, Health and Safety; Compendex: Aerospace Engineering; Compendex: Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Chemical Abstracts: Health and Safety in Chemistry — all on CD laser disks.

IBM has unofficially phased out the IBM PC. Dealers and distributors are receiving floppy-based PC XT machines when they order regular PC's.

U.S. Customs, which had been concentrating on fake Apple II imports, is now targeting fake IBM PC machines as well.

T/Maker has released Personal Publisher, a page layout program for the IBM PC, for $185. You must have 384K of memory, a Hercules monochrome card, IBM color graphics card, two disk drives, and one of the more common dot-matrix printers to use it. Unfortunately, to use it most effectively you need a Macintosh to prepare graphics, and if you had a Macintosh you wouldn't need the IBM PC or this program.

IBM has made a change in the ROM of the PC AT which limits the processor to 6 MHz. Users had been changing the clock crystal to boost the machine to 8 or 10 MHz, but IBM apparently didn't like this. IBM has also patched PCDOS 3.1 in such a way that it refuses to accept non-IBM hard disks and hard disk controllers.

Reflex, one of the most powerful database programs made, is no longer available for $495. Borland Intl., of Sidekick, Turbo Pascal, etc., fame, purchased the package and is now selling non-copy protected versions for the IBM PC for just $99.95. If you have an IBM PC or compatible, this is for you! It works great with dBASE II files.

There is now a $179 program for the IBM PC (192K, graphics card, two drives required) which helps you arrange furniture. Roomer1 can handle

up to 50 pieces of furniture with "measurements of actual rooms." Another useful function for your $4000 electronic investment.

Atari admits its previous estimate of 600,000 to more than a million 520ST machines sold in 1985 will be off. They now say just 10,000 have been shipped, but "we expect dramatically increased sales very soon . . ."

Atari intends to introduce a hard-disk version of the 520ST in early 1986 with 1 Mb of RAM, to be called the 1040ST. (1040? Introduced in April, maybe?) Another machine, using the 68020, will be introduced late in 1986. Called the TT series, it will run under UNIX System V.

George Morrow of Morrow Computing: "Chip makers all think that standards are great -- everyone should have one."

Commodore claims it shipped 150,000 C-128 computers in Sept. alone, and will soon emerge from its financial difficulties. Retailers are skeptical, pointing out thatm while this many may have been shipped, no where near 150,000 – or even 50,000 -- were sold in Sept. and Oct. combined.

Tandy's newest laptop computer, the Model 600, lists for $1595, has 32K RAM expandable to 224K in 96K chunks, uses a 16-bit chip, has an 80 x 16 line display, a built-in audo dial, auto answer modem and a built-in 3.5" disk drive which holds 360K. It runs under MicrosoftWorks, and includes versions of Word (very sophisticated), File (very flexible), Telcom (to run the modem), Calendar (it will even beep the alarm when the machine is turned off), and GW BASIC (on a separate ROM module). It also includes parallel and serial ports, and an external floppy disk drive port, and all 11 pounds of it will run 8 hours on the built-in rechargable batteries.

Intel has officially released the 80386 chip, a 32-bit microprocessor offered in 12 and 16 MHz versions. The chip offers a real address range of 4 gigabytes and a virtual address range of 64 tetrabytes. Intel spent $100 million developing the chip, and will sell you a sample for just $300 (if you buy at least 100). In theory, the 80386 can run software written for the 8-bit 8080 or the 16-bit 8086 series.

Ado, a fairly new store in Akihabara, has a huge selection of Apple hardware and software (II and Mac) at good prices. Ado is a few blocks out of the mainstream, but if you're in the area be sure and look them up. Come to the meeting for directions.

Tokyo Union Church, located a block from Omotesando subway station (take the A-1 exit), is now hosting IBM PC, Macintosh, and Apple II users groups. IBM meets the first Thurs., MacPack the second, and Ringo (Apple II) the third.

At the MacPack meeting in Dec. an Apple rep. demonstrated the 20 Mb hard disk for the Macintosh. It stands about 3 in. high, fits under the Mac, connects to the external disk drive port, has its own power supply and cord, and includes a nice, quiet fan. Additional hard disks can be "daisy chained," and a floppy disk can be plugged in to the back. It runs under a new operating system, Finder 5.1, which is significantly faster than Finder 4.1. Finder 5.1 will also be included in a $300 or so upgrade Apple will offer in the States which will change the current 64K Mac ROM for a 128K ROM and also swap the internal 400K drive for an 800K drive. If the price holds firm, this is an outstanding deal. When it will be offered in Japan is unknown.

A representative from The Browne Co. (Dave Russel, tel. 03-207-3520) gave a real, real quick demonstration of an external 800K drive for the Macintosh. It plugs right in and, sure enough, holds 800K. It will be sold in Tokyo for ¥98,000, but is available to MacPack members for ¥89,000.

What, me worry: the chart below shows the 1984 revenues of IBM, the rest of the top 10 computer firms, and the rest of the top 100.

- ■ IBM (39%)
- ▦ Top 10 (29%)
- ▧ Top 100 (32%)